

Planters Bank Building and Warehouse
224 East Austin Street
Jefferson
Marion County
Texas

HABS No. TEX-144

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TEX-144

PLANTERS BANK BUILDING AND WAREHOUSE

Location: 224 East Austin Street, Jefferson, Marion County,
Texas

Present Owner: Hobart Key, Jr., Marshall, Texas

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Unused

Statement of
Significance: This building is one of the best remaining examples
of mid-nineteenth century commercial architecture
in Jefferson. The warehouse at the rear of the
building, which extends toward the Big Cyprus
Bayou, is a reminder of the days when Jefferson
was the leading inland port of the Southwest.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: John Speake purchased the property for the building from Allen Urquhart in 1852 (Marion County Deed Book 3, p. 188). Speake sold the property to Samuel Stern and Isaac Spinski in 1862 (Marion County Deed Book B, p. 323). In 1868, William Harrison began the Planters Bank (letter from present owner July 16, 1966). In 1899, the building was occupied by the National Bank of Jefferson (letter from present owner). The warehouse was operated by the Arbuckle Coffee Company during this time. The Key family acquired the property in 1947 (letter from present owner July 22, 1966).
2. Date of erection: Between 1852 and 1862. It is believed to have been built shortly after John Speake purchased the property.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Builder: John Speake was a promoter, realtor and contractor and, therefore, probably the builder (letter from the present owner July 16, 1966).

5. Alterations and additions: The bank appears to have been altered very little. On the first floor, it still retains a masonry vault and a teller's enclosure. A fire damaged the warehouse section of the building which was originally two stories high. The back and side walls were rebuilt to approximately one-half their original height, and a new roof constructed. A heavy buttress was installed at the back of the bank to stabilize the wall between the warehouse and the bank which is still two stories high.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Until the mid-1870's, Jefferson was the largest inland port in the Southwest. It was served by steamships which came up the Red River and the Big Cypress Bayou. The Big Cypress was made navigable by a natural dam in the Red River known as the great raft. When this mass of logs and debris was cleared out in 1874, the water level in Big Cypress Bayou fell, and Jefferson was no longer accessible to steamships.

The warehouse at the rear of the bank extended back to what was once the turning basin for boats on the Big Cypress Bayou. It serves as a reminder of Jefferson's thriving commercial days. At that time, the bank and warehouse were adjacent to the central business district.

C. Sources of Information:

Marion County Deed Books, Marion County Courthouse, Jefferson, Texas.

Correspondence with present owner.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is one of the finest remaining examples of the nineteenth-century business buildings of Jefferson. The two-story construction, round-arched openings on the first floor, segmental-arched second-story windows, French doors, and fanlight transoms are common features of numerous commercial buildings in Jefferson. The cast-iron balcony railing also appears on other commercial buildings, but it is not a typical feature. (A similar three-bay structure adjoins the bank on the southwest and continues its cornice line.)
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Bank: 35'-9" (four-bay front) x 45'-9". Warehouse: 35'-9" x 89'-2".
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction and finish: Walls are of brick, 1'-6" thick. On the front, five brick pilasters separate the four bays.
4. Balcony: The balcony overhangs the sidewalk 8' and is the full width of the front. It has a decorative cast-iron railing and is supported by five tubular metal columns.
5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: There are four French doors in round-arch openings across the front of the bank. Each leaf of the double doors has two wooden panels at the bottom and two large lights, vertically stacked, above. Above each door is a fanlight transom. The bank has a secondary door at the east corner which has four horizontal wooden panels. The door is contained in a stuccoed surround.

The warehouse has two large double doors, one in a round-arched opening on the long northeast side, and one in a rectangular opening at the center of the rear elevation. Both doors are composed of narrow slanting boards.

- b. Windows: The bank has wooden, double-hung, six-over-six light sash contained in segmental-arched openings. Lintels and sills are iron.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The bank has two gable roofs with ridges running perpendicular to the front facade. The valleys drain into gutterheads on the front of the building. This section is covered with standing-seam, sheet-metal roofing.

The warehouse roof is flat with built-up roofing.

- b. Framing: On the bank, 2" x 6" rafters were used to frame the roof.

The warehouse has a relatively recent roof constructed with 2" x 8" joists over steel trusses.

- c. Cornice: The bank has a brick parapet which hides its double gable roof. The parapet has a broad stuccoed band.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The first floor of the bank is undivided except for a row of cast-iron columns in the center, and a masonry vault in the south corner. The vault may have been added after the original building was constructed.

The warehouse is entirely open.

- b. Second floor: The second floor is divided into three rooms, one is without windows.

2. Stairways: There is a quarter-turn stairway in the east corner which is open to the first floor only. It has two uneven runs and an intervening landing from which the side door opens. The newels are rectangular and the balusters, likewise rectangular, are closely spaced.

3. Flooring: In the bank the flooring is 5"-wide pine.

Concrete of recent origin is in the warehouse.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls in the bank are plastered. On the first floor the ceiling is finished with narrow tongue-and-groove boards. The ceiling finish on the second floor is plaster.

5. Doorways and doors: The interior doors, apparently of recent date, are constructed from 3/4" tongue-and-groove pine boards. There are transoms over the doors.

6. Trim: 12" baseboard throughout with quarter-round shoe-mold. Windows and doors have 6" plain casings.

7. Hardware: Iron latch hardware with porcelain knobs.

8. Lighting: Electric fixtures.

9. Heating: None.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The building faces northwest and occupies the entire site.
The public sidewalk runs under the balcony and is contiguous
with the front of the bank.

Prepared by Willard B. Robinson, AIA
Supervisory Architect, HABS
National Park Service
July 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made in 1966 during a summer project financed by the National Park Service to record 16 structures in Jefferson and the near-by area. The summer recording team received the cooperation of numerous citizens and organizations in the form of office space, lodgings, board, and research assistance. Among the cooperators were the Dan Lester Drilling Company, the Excelsior Hotel, Mrs. A. K. Payne, the Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club, and the Marion County Chamber of Commerce.

The project was under the direction of A. Lewis Koue of the National Park Service's Western Office in San Francisco. Supervisor of the recording team was Willard B. Robinson, AIA, of Texas Technological College. The team was composed of student architects: David L. Bouse of the University of Nebraska; Bob J. Fong of the University of Idaho; Donald Quackenbush of Washington State University; and Robert M. Swanson of the University of Texas. Photographs were made by National Park Service Photographer, Jack E. Boucher.